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RUEHPOD/AMEMBASSY PODGORICA 0108  
RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO 0762  
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 3019  
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHINGTON DC  
RUWDQAC/COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFIUU/US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFIUU/USCBP WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 TIRANA 000594

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TAGS: [ETTC](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [KSTC](#) [KNNP](#) [AL](#)

SUBJECT: EXBS ALBANIA REPORTING CABLE FOR JUNE AND JULY 2009

11. (U) BROAD ITEMS OF INTEREST TO ADVISORS AND AGENCY MANAGERS

--June 18: An inauguration event for the Joint Border Crossing Point (JBCP) of Muriqan/Sukobine at the Albania/Montenegro border was held. This is the first joint border crossing point in the Balkans. The inauguration event was attended by the Prime Ministers of Albania and Montenegro, the Ministers of Interior for both countries and the Ambassador to the EU Delegation in Albania. The JBCP started operations on June 30, 2009.

--June 18: An inauguration event for the nationwide operation of the internet-based Integrated Customs Information System-ASYCUDA WORLD was held. The ASYCUDA World software was donated by UNCTAD in Geneva with technical assistance funded by GOA. The Prime Minister and the Deputy Secretary General of UNCTAD attended the inaugural event.

--June 24: A new border crossing point with Kosovo was inaugurated in the village of Borje, Shishtavec municipality in Kukes. The inauguration ceremony was attended by senior-level representatives from Kukes Regional Border Police and State Police as well as their counterparts from Prizren Municipality in Kosovo.

--June 24: The President of Albania hosted a meeting with the Presidents of Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo in Vlore. The four Presidents called the meeting important and meaningful for the collaboration between their countries. Topics of discussion included bilateral relations and other regional issues.

--June 28: Albania held its Parliamentary Elections and preliminary results show the Democratic Party in the lead with the Socialist Party trailing by very small margin indicating that the winning party will not have a majority vote. The official results were released after the reporting period.

12. (U) COMPLETED ACTIONS FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD

See paragraphs 4 and 5 below discussing equipment and training.

13. (SBU) MEETINGS DURING REPORTING PERIOD

--June 11: Maritime Advisor (MA) met with representatives from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Radiation Protection Office (RPO) to discuss preparations for a training event

to be delivered by IAEA and funded by EXBS in November. Additional training needs identified during the meeting include radiation awareness for line officers to help them overcome their fear of dealing with potentially radioactive sources, maintenance of radiation detection equipment, procedures for handling radiation alarms and clarification of RPO and Customs' roles and responsibilities. MA accompanied IAEA and Customs on a field visit to the Ports of Durres and Vlore, to include a check of equipment previously donated by IAEA. The portal monitor in Durres is now functioning for the first time since delivery due to recurring maintenance problems; however, the installation location of the monitor renders it somewhat ineffective in terms of stopping a vehicle that triggers an alarm.

--June 19: MA attended an International Consortium Integrated Border Management Working Group meeting. Customs, Border Police, Navy/Coast Guard, PAMECA, ICITAP and other international organizations attended the meeting. Issues discussed include the draft Council of Ministers Decision for the Interagency Maritime Operations Center (IMOC), which is currently with the Minister of Defense. The Director General of Border Police announced he had established a risk analysis office and that, in May, Customs and Border Police held their first joint meeting with risk analysis a focal point. The Border Police DG also raised concerns about the construction issues at the JBCP with Montenegro and stated that both governments agreed to match personnel staffing and that an operations procedures protocol was signed on June 18.

--June 24: MA visited the JBCP at Murigan/Sukobine and the Shkoder Border Police Station. Delivery of necessary equipment such as computers and furniture at the JBCP was still pending and there was

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a high degree of confusion as to how a joint BCP should function. MA suggested a best practice exchange with Customs and Border Police officers from the EU that have experience working JBCPs, which was positively received by both Albanian and Montenegrin officials at the JBCP. MA met with the Shkoder Border Police Station Commander and conducted an assessment of equipment and training needs for Lake Shkoder Border Police noting that radar and personal protective equipment are needed. The Lake Border Police have been conducting joint lake patrols with the Montenegrins since January 2009.

--June 25: MA met with visiting officials from SOCEUR to discuss their projects and programs for Albania in terms of training and equipment needs.

--July 9: MA attended a regional meeting of Border Police officials organized under the Geneva Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). The meeting was held in Podgorica and Border Police officers from Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia participated. Each country provided an update on projects they are working and results from their collaborative operations. Some lessons learned include language barriers during joint patrols and flexibility to add joint patrols not previously scheduled. Future meetings have been scheduled to take place throughout the region and Albania will host the next DCAF ministerial meeting.

--July 10: Met with the Harbor Master, Port Security Forces and Border Police in Vlore as part of a Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) visit to discuss port security issues in preparation for possible US Navy ship visits. Conducted a joint meeting with Deputy Chief of Port Security Forces and Border Police and discussed manning, standard operating procedures and coordination overall.

--July 13-16: MA met with the Commonwealth Trading Partners (CTP) instructors for the National Control List Workshop and discussed identifying potential train-the-trainer candidates during the workshop, conducting an industry outreach course by the end of 2009 and involving a representative from the prosecutor's office in future trainings to pave the way for prosecution of export control offenders.

--July 16: MA met with the CTP instructors and the Chairman of the State Export Control Agency to discuss progress with Tracker implementation and next steps, and collaboration with Customs,

especially for data entry in ASYCUDA to control automated system alerts on cargo shipments.

--July 16: MA met with the Commander of the Naval School in Vlore along with representatives from EUCOM to discuss a proposal submitted by MA to EUCOM for refurbishing the school and assisting with curriculum development and modernization. EUCOM funding is still pending and proposal will require further justification to secure the funding.

--July 23: MA attended a joint Border Police and Customs meeting at Albanian State Police Headquarters. This is the second joint meeting to take place between Border Police and Customs and the first meeting where internationals were invited. The meeting was also attended by ICITAP and PAMECA. Topics included the Integrated Border Management strategy and its action plan, strengthening each agency's capacities, adaptation of BCP infrastructure to implement the "one stop control principle" being implemented at the JBCP at Muriqan/Sukobine, measures to better manage increased traffic during the summer months and tracking all equipment in use at each BCP to ensure it is in working condition and determine what more is needed. Customs expressed its appreciation to EXBS for the significant contribution of equipment and training that EXBS has been providing to Customs.

--July 29: MA met with the Border Police's blue border team to discuss future plans, equipment and training needs. Of key importance is their need for boats. The current fleet is almost completely out of commission and while there are plans for the EU to assist with providing new boats, funding has not yet been finalized and delivery will take a fair amount of time. There are plans to

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build classrooms in Durres and Vlore and appoint two training officers so that Border Police can train its own officers in lieu of Italy's Guardia di Finanza. These two officers will be responsible for training and maintenance of the boats. The DG of Border Police asked EXBS for assistance with Lake Kukes as there have been problems with smuggling on this lake between Kosovo and Albania. Border Police has sent one boat there to conduct patrols but they foresee an increase in smuggling activities in the near future.

--July 31: MA met with the Customs Director of Operations, who discussed the need for training on portal monitors, specifically in recognizing alarms and actions his officers should take when an alarm sounds. The problematic areas are containers coming from Greece and Macedonia.

#### 14. (U) TRAINING CONDUCTED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

--June 25-26: 10th International Export Control Conference took place in Istanbul, Turkey. Two Albanian officials from the State Export Control Agency and one official from the General Directorate of Customs attended the conference.

--July 14-16: Commonwealth Trading Partners provided a National Control List Workshop to twenty representatives from the Albanian State Export Control Agency, Customs and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy.

#### 15. (U) EQUIPMENT DELIVERED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

--July 16: MA delivered five desk-top computers to the Naval School in Vlore. Value of donated equipment is \$3,800

#### 16. (SBU) IMMINENT TRAINING OR EQUIPMENT STATUSREPORT:

--August 24-28: Best Practice Exchange to the Muriqan/Sukobine JBCP. This training is being conducted in collaboration with the Police Assistance Mission of the European Community to Albania (PAMECA). Two Austrian Customs Officers and two Austrian Border Police Officers will share best practices and lessons learned with the Albanian and Montenegrin Customs and Border Police Officers at the JBCP.

-- August 31-December 4: Two Navy/Coast Guard officers will attend the U.S. Coast Guard International Maritime Officers Course in Yorktown, Virginia.

--September 14-18: U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers will provide International Border Interdiction Training at the Qafe Thane border crossing point.

--Maritime equipment procured through the U.S. Coast Guard arrived in Tirana in July for donation to GOA Navy/Coast Guard, Border Police Maritime Units and Customs Maritime Anti-Contraband Units.

¶7. SBU) SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS IN EXPORT CONTROLS, NONPROLIFERATION, OR RELATED BORDER SECURITY

--None.

¶8. U) PORTAL MONITOR ALERTS

-- None.

¶9. ( ) RED FLAG ISSUES

-- None.

¶10. (U) POC: LT Cari Bower, email: bowerc@state.gov.